Exciting Times for NAOP
Long Sought Strategic Plan Goals Achieved

The National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP) is immensely pleased to announce the hiring of Catherine Nagel as Executive Director and a partnership with the City Parks Alliance (CPA). Ms. Nagel will guide an administrative team serving this partnership that will be based in Washington, DC. Ms. Nagel started work April 1, 2004.

Hiring of Executive Director
The new Executive Director has extensive non-profit experience, working with a board, managing staff and raising money. She established and directed the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, a group whose purpose is to promote positive relations between Philadelphia and Japan. Her work included a highly successful long-term horticultural and cultural event in Fairmount Park that will add 1000 trees to Philadelphia’s landscape by 2007. Ms Nagel has written, “Beautification and transformation of the city through these trees unexpectedly created a new community of people who became committed to improving the physical urban landscape through ownership of neglected park lands. Intrigued by the notion of public space and ‘greening’ as a potential generator of civility, pride, community, educational opportunity, and artistic expression, along with my experience working with designers, park officials, and horticulturists, I was prompted to pursue a graduate degree.”

Ms. Nagel recently completed her landscape architectural degree at the University of Pennsylvania. Her summer experience included work with firms specializing in urban design and landscape architecture.

Partnership formed with the City Parks Alliance
NAOP and CPA share important common objectives and their boards have determined to form a working partnership while having certain goals that are individual to each organization. We have agreed to work together on common projects, such as a website for best practices, and to share administrative staff and an office.

CPA’s goals include: greater involvement and investment in our nation’s city parks; city parks recognized and more fully valued for the role they play in building stronger, healthier, and more livable cities; and a stronger and broader nationwide constituency of supporters to place city parks higher on the list of the nation’s priorities.

CPA’s co-chairs are: Tupper Thomas, President of the Prospect Park Alliance in Brooklyn, former chair of NAOP and a long time board member, and Karen Hobbs with the Center for Neighborhood Technology in Chicago. Its board includes four members of the NAOP board - Meg Cheever, Kevin Moore, Regina Peruggi and Jerry Baum, former board member Betsy Shure Gross, and several national organizations such as the Trust for Public Land and the American Planning Association. Organizational and Professional Members now approximate 130 (More information on CPA is available on its website, www.pps.org/CityParksAlliance).

NAOP and CPA will maintain separate boards, but the boards will meet in the same cities starting in Spring 2005 and will spend time together discussing their common agenda. The two organizations will raise money together for shared projects, and separately for independent projects such as NAOP’s work in research and selected advocacy efforts such as protecting the Olmsted designed grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

There will be an eight person management team representing both organizations to guide this partnership and work with the Executive Director. Each organization’s representatives will include the co-chairs, secretary and treasurer.

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National Association for Olmsted Parks
Welcomes its First Lifetime Member,
Jean McKee

Ms. McKee joined the board a year ago and brings a wonderful blend of experience. She was head of staff for Senator Jacob K. Javits, and is a distant cousin of Frederick Law Olmsted. Ms. McKee splits her life between Washington and Goshen, Connecticut, where she lives in her parent’s home, dating from 1733, which was home to F.L. in 1843-1844.

NAOP would welcome additional Lifetime members. If you want to join Ms McKee, please utilize the enclosed envelope.
Bushnell Park’s 150th Anniversary Celebration: 1854-2004

Sandy Parisley, long-time NAOP member and former Board Chair, reports that Bushnell Park Foundation will organize a symposium on September 30 and October 1 focusing on the public park movement viewed from both a national and local perspective. The event will take place at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and will mark the Park’s 150th anniversary. Trinity’s original campus plan was a Frederick Law Olmsted design.

The Symposium will trace the history of the Park, and the ways in which that story intersects with the history of Hartford. Throughout, the Park and the city will be treated as case studies, allowing a larger set of American themes and issues to emerge. Topics to be covered include the park movement in America in the 1850s; Horace Bushnell and the role of civic leaders in effecting change; an historical overview of Hartford’s ethnic populations and their relationship to the city’s economic structure; the Park and its uses; and how Hartford is addressing urban issues and challenges today. Charles Beveridge is one of several distinguished speakers invited to participate.

A variety of exhibitions and performances are planned to coincide with the milestone in collaboration with several cultural institutions. For more information, please contact Sandy Parisley at (860) 232-6710.

Union County, New Jersey hosts Olmsted Symposium

“The Lasting Imprint of Olmsted” was the title of a symposium held on May 28 by the Union County, New Jersey, Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs and the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation. Held in Summit, NJ, at the historic Reeves-Reed Arboretum and at Briant Pond Park, designed by the Olmsted firm, the symposium addressed the history and design of the Union County Parks system, the second County Parks system in New Jersey designed by the firm, which includes such important urban parks as Warren Arts Park and Railway River Park. The keynote address was given by Dr. Charles Beveridge, who spoke about the significance of the Union County work in the body of national work by the Olmsteads. Other speakers included Kathleen P. Gallop, NAOP member and former Board member; landscape architect Faye Harwell; NAOP Board and Riverside & Harwell, Incorporated; Sean Ryan, Union County Parks Department landscape architect; and Marta McDowell, of the Reeves Reed Arboretum. The Summit NJ, Garden Club and the Friends of Briant Pond Park, led by NAOP member Elen Hakes, also helped sponsor the event. The symposium, attended by over 120 people, was a major demonstration of support by the Board of Trustees of Union County toward the effort of protecting and rehabilitating its historic Olmsted design legacy.

Tower Grove Park’s Preservation Efforts Recognized by NAOP

NAOP Trustees presented a Resolution to St. Louis’ Tower Grove Park on April 23 that recognized the extensive and exemplary work of preservation and restoration undertaken in the Park over the past fifteen years. Once in a state of neglect and very poor repair, the Park has undergone a major restoration campaign and is now a vital and exciting part of the civic life of St. Louis. Tower Grove Park was founded in 1867 by St. Louis businessman and philanthropist Henry Shaw and is a National Historic Landmark. The 289-acre landscape is designed in the gardenscopic style. Former NAOP Trustee and Tower Grove Park Director John Karel accepted the document. His leadership to restore the park and long-term service to NAOP were lauded by Trustees who had gathered at the “Gateway to the West” for their semi-annual meeting.
Phase I of the Rockery Restoration Complete

Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1881-1882, the Rockery sits in the center of the H.H. Richardson National Historic Landmark District in North Easton, Massachusetts, within sight of Oakes Ames Memorial Hall and the Ames Free Library. Designed to commemorate the Civil War, the boulder structure was referred to by Olmsted as the Memorial Cairn, but came to be known popularly as the Rockery. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the structure fell into serious disrepair; the flagpole that graced the eastern overlook was removed, plantings became overgrown, volunteer trees took root and, most significantly, portions of the retaining walls were demolished out of concern for public safety.

With funding and technical assistance from the Massachusetts Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program, the Town of Easton hired a consultant to prepare a historic landscape report and master plan for the Rockery, and implemented the first phase of construction. Work included rebuilding portions of the retaining walls, removing vegetation and installing new plantings based on 1880s correspondence from Olmsted and a 1903 plan by the Olmsted Brothers. The project was designed by McGinley Kalsow & Associates, architects, with Bradford Design Associates, landscape architects, and executed by Folan Waterproofing and Emanoul Brothers Landscaping. Completed in November 2003, the first phase of construction increased public awareness about the significance of the Rockery and helped the Town secure a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which will support the next phase of the restoration of this unique Olmsted work. For more information on the project, contact Joanna Doherty, Preservation Planner at the Department of Conservation and Recreation by email, Joanna.doherty@state.ma.us or by phone, (617) 626-1390.

In Memoriam
Edward P. Straka, 1929-2004

It is with sadness and deep sympathy to his family, that NAoP reports the death of former Trustee Eddie Straka on July 13, 2004. He lived in Riverside, Illinois, the first residential community designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

Ed served with distinction on the NAoP board. He was an architect and was devoted to Olmsted, historic preservation and NAoP. Ed has earned a great debt of gratitude from us for his dedicated hard work to historic preservation in general and the community of Riverside in particular.

Ed Straka is survived by his wife, Cecilia Zobeski, four children and seven grandchildren. His family has said that "Ed shared his passion for the NAoP and Olmsted with others".

The family has requested that in memoriam gifts be made to NAoP and sent to the Buffalo office or to the family.

Bird's-eye view of the Rockery, circa 1880, Easton Historical Society Collection

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Letters Welcome! Send to naopinfo@aol.com

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